4:Du Tertre--1 M-4 (no date) 1667 ST13 Callinago ST13
(ca. 1650)

CONCERNING THE NATIVES OF THE ANTILLES

The Origin of the Island Caribs

173 The Caribs are filled with all kinds of theories concerning their
●773 origin and it is not a little difficult to get from them even the semblance of truth, because of the diversity of their stories. Among so many different opinions, however, they do hold one belief in common: they say they are descended from the Galibis, a people who dwell in South America and are their closest neighbors. They do not know the time nor the reason which impelled them to leave their native land and led them to expand into these rather remote islands. They only affirm that their first father, a man called Kalinago [Breton: Callinago], became restless among his nation and, wishing to conquer new lands, embarked with all his family. After having sailed for quite a long time he established himself in Dominica which is an island where Caribs live in fairly large numbers. Kalinago's children, losing the respect that they owed to their father, gave him a poisonous drink which caused his death. Yet it is said he changed his shape and became a hideous fish, which is called by them Arraioman and which lives even today in the river. Only the simplest people agree about this metamorphosis. The others consider it to be a complete delusion.

114 Since one cannot infer anything from this fable which would fully
173 satisfy us concerning their origin, the reader must content himself with what has been stated by the Reverend Father Raymond [Breton] in his dictionary. I don't think there is anyone in Europe at the present time who has a more certain knowledge than he does, for he has spent a good part of his life with these islanders, from whom he has learned everything which it is possible to know about them. Here are his own words:

173 "I have finally learned from the captains on the island of Dominica that the words Galibis and Carib were names that had been given to them by Europeans. Their true name was Callinago and they designated themselves only with the words: oubaóbanum and bolodébonum: that is to say, 'from the islands' and 'from the continent.' These Island Caribs

785 while others more robust satisfy themselves for nine or ten days with
a bit of bread and water. If they did not hold to this rigorous ab-
262 stinence they would be considered weaklings. They are also super-
stitious in their avoidance of salt, pig meat, tortoises, manatees,
fat, eggs and a large number of animals which would have been con-
sidered unclean according to the law of Moses. They also have a
589 custom of marrying female first cousins; cousins of the sons of two
brothers call themselves brothers. They have no names and they
551 ordinarily call a man the son of so and so, as the Jews are accustomed
to do. This has given rise to the opinion that they were descended
from Jews, but no reasons are provided by them which might indicate
that they practice all of these customs for religious reason, so that
it is not worth while to infer any consequences from this fact.

778 They believe in the immortality of the soul, but say that each
● 773 man has three souls; one in the heart, one in the head, and another
in the arm. The soul in the heart manifests itself by its throbbing
and goes straight to heaven upon death to be very happy there. The
souls in the arm and head manifest themselves by the beating of the
pulse and throb of the arteries. They become maboyas, that is to say,
evil spirits, which they believe to be the cause of everything sinister
and disastrous.

Concerning Birth, Education and Marriage, of the Caribs

695 Since nature was corrupted by the wickedness of our first parents,
it has been absolutely necessary to have laws to enlighten reason and
to direct it without error to the correct path of truth. It should not
astonish us if the birth, life, and customs of our unenlightened Caribs
are filled with superstition, errors, and nonsense which brings amuse-
ment at the same time that it brings tears to the eyes of those who
have true Christian sentiments.

814 Among their nonsense which upset me the most was a superstition
practised by men at the birth of their children. Women give birth
with little pain, and if labor is difficult for some of them they know
how to relieve it using a special root as a remedy and which has an

5: Rouse E-4 (no date) 1948 ST13 Callinago ST13
(1650-1700)

of the chiefs, who gave notice several days in advance so that food and 527
drink could be prepared. The feast took place in the carbet, but both
men and women, dressed in their best, participated. They spent all
day and most of the night in eating, drinking, singing, and dancing,
usually becoming quite drunk.

Both men and women participated in the singing, not only at the 533
feasts but also to pass the time of day. Most songs had to do with
warfare; others dealt with birds, fish, and women.

Dancing seems to have been confined to the feasts (pl. 95). Men and 535
women performed alone or together. They moved in a circle, dancing in
pairs, arm in arm. The men performed violently, but the women moved
only their feet. The dances were accompanied by songs, the drum, the
rattle, a stringed instrument, and the flute. The drum, hollowed from a log, 534
had a single head of skin. The rattle consisted of a gourd with a wooden
handle. The stringed instrument, too, was of gourd; it had a single
string. The flutes were made of bamboo or the bones of an enemy.[8]

Carib men played flutes in the morning, while their wives prepared
breakfast. They used conch-shell trumpets for signaling while on raids
or when hunting or fishing; at night they also had recourse to signal flares.

Intoxicants and narcotics.—They were fond of drinking and made 273
several different kinds of beer (ollicou) from sweetpotatoes or from a
mixture of sweetpotatoes and manioc. The women chewed this material,
allowed it to ferment for several days, and then strained it. They also
brewed beer from the coarser manioc bread which they laid aside until it
became mouldy.

The *Carib* smoked tobacco, rolling it into cigars like those of the 276
Arawak.[9] There is no mention of snuff, but tobacco chewing was com-
mon. The *Carib* dried the leaves over the fire, softened them with sea
water, and kneaded them into rolls which served as money. Before
chewing they added ashes and packed the quid between the lip and gum.

RELIGION AND SHAMANISM

The *Carib* believed in a plurality of souls, which they associated with 775
the beating of the heart and arteries. The soul in the heart was supposed 775.1
to go to an earthlike paradise in heaven, where it became part of a com-
pany of good spirits, or akamboue.[10] The souls in the rest of the body
either stayed in the bones after death or went into the forests or seashores.
They were regarded as evil spirits, maboya; those in the sea had a special
name, onicon.

[8] Neither the drum nor the stringed instrument is mentioned in all the sources. They may have been historic developments.

[9] Labat (1931, p. 88) observed men smoking for pleasure. Davies (1666, p. 240), however, describes only the use of tobacco by shamans during curing ceremonies.

[10] Some believed that the paradise was on earth rather than in the heavens and that only the successful warriors went there, the rest of the people being found to live after death in another and more barren land.

6: Taylor E-5 (1930-1937) 1938
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parrots alive by stupefying them in their roosts with the smoke of green 223
peppers placed together with burning charcoal in a calabash raised on the end of a long bamboo rod.

Birds are sometimes enticed to the snares by an imitation of their call or by a live captive of their own species used as a decoy.

There is no particular interest attaching to the local methods of 224
hunting wild pig, agouti, and manicou. The latter (the West Indian opossum) is often caught by hand; whereas the Caribs, without bows or guns, rely upon their dogs both to find and kill agouti and pig.

Legend and Tradition

The present-day Caribs have not the long memories of the Scottish 773
Highlanders. Anything that happened a long time ago took place, for them, in the reign of one P'tit François. Little François seems to have been, in spite of his name, a very big chief. One would be inclined to regard him as an almost legendary figure were it not that, from all accounts, Jolly John, the present chief, is only his sixth successor. Here is the list:

1. P'tit François.
2. Wakanik (also called Pigotte).
3. Joseph (mentioned by Oliver as alive in 1877).
4. Brunio (whose son, Fanfan, is now about 75).
5. Augustin.
6. Carlotin.
7. Jolly John.

Joseph and his sister, Ma' Augustin, noted for having spoken little else but Carib, are said to have been the younger brother and sister of P'tit François. As both of them died within the memory of old people still living, P'tit François himself cannot possibly take us much farther back than the middle of the last century. Fanfan says he was "a big little boy" at the time of Joseph's death. Supposing Joseph and his predecessor, Wakanik, to have reigned 30 years between them (a generous allowance), this would place P'tit François' death at about 1845.

P'tit François is said to have been, among other things, a "manitou" (magnétiseur), which I understand to mean a sort of spiritualistic medium. Before holding communication with the spirits he would request his client to place a full unopened bottle of rum upon the table for the use of the ethereal visitors, whose thirsty "glou-glou-glou" might thereafter be heard distinctly and taken as a sure sign of their arrival and readiness to cooperate. Strange to relate, after the spirits' departure, the bottle was always found as full and intact as ever.

6: Taylor E-5 (1930-1937) 1938
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●773 When the people were troubled by the depredations of rats, P'tit François would invoke their king, and demand—it is said with success—that His Ratty Majesty keep his subjects in order.

A fragment of what I believe to be a very old legend was recounted to me by Fanfan as something that actually happened in the days of this wonderful chief.

At that time there lived in Salybia two brothers called Mâroûka and Cimankri, famous for the charms they made. They would go up to the house of the Tête-Chien [1] to find the Master Tête-Chien—the same who, when the earth was soft, made the Stairway of the Tête-Chien at Cinâkru.[2] He is big, big, big, has a crest of diamond on his head, and crown just like a cock. Well, when they found him, they would take powdered tobacco and burn it before him on the blade of a paddle. Then that tête-chien would vomit, and all that he vomited was red "l'ouvrez carailbe".[3] After that the snake would disappear gradually, and in his place came a young man "sans culotte" (naked). The young man said nothing about his being the Tête-Chien, but asked Mâroûka and Cimankri what it was they wanted, and instructed them, when they had told him, how they must use the ouvrez carailbe to make their charms.

Mâroûka and Cimankri did not die in Salybia. When they felt old age approaching they went away to the other country. When they reached the shores of the Orinoco River they plunged into the stream, and when they came out on the opposite bank they had become two young lads again, and on the water where they had been there floated two turtle shells.

They never came back to Dominica, and at last one of them died; but the other, as far as I know, is still living there.

773 [[34]] Leaving the Stairway of the Tête-Chien, and going northward by way of the Mahe, Gaulette, Salybia, and Crayfish Rivers almost to the present northern boundary of the Reserve, we come to the little hamlet of Bataka (or Barulpi), nestling on the hillside 15 minutes hard climb above the "highway." Most of the full-blooded Caribs remaining are to be found here today. The people of Bataka are not very well liked by the other Caribs, among whom they have a name for treachery and for practicing "piaie," even against one another.

On the extremity of a narrow ridge opposite and beyond Bataka is perched a huge rock, itself some 60 feet in height, that overlooks the valley of the Pegoua, the ocean, and the Reserve. It is composed of a blackish, crumbling rock, and on its summit and from its precipitous sides grow vines and plants, a stunted scrub, and a kind of wild orchid. It is known as La Roche Pegoua, and is the home of a benevolent spirit about whom many tales are told, one of which is related below.

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[1] Tête-Chien: "dog-headed". Antillean mountaineer, small boy attaining up to 12 feet in height and the thickness of a man's thigh. Carib: wa-na-gul.

[2] House of Tête-Chien; so-called. Rocky cliff in the heights of the Commary River, said to be much frequented by these snakes. Legendary home of the giant snake of this and other legends, said to have had a precious stone (variously called carbuncle, diamond) of extraordinary brilliance on its head, and which it was capable of covering with a sort of movable membrane, or eyelid, thus creating at will light or darkness in the forest. The Stairway of the Tête-Chien, so-called, is a formation of soft gritty or rotten rock of reddish color and apparently volcanic origin, which emerges from the soil on the crest of the ridge called Cinâkru, above the Abaye River, and proceeds in a series of "steps" down the side of the cliff to the sea, under which it continues and can be followed from a boat for quite a distance.

[3] L'ouvrez carailbe: a species of red guarana whose roots are said to "pitch," and which is used only for charms. When planting, it is usual to place a piece of silver in the ground along with it. Has become rare.

6: Taylor E-5 (1930-1937) 1938
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The people of Bataka used to go up to the Pagoua Rock in search of charms. There are steps leading to the base of the rock, and, on its top, a crack that goes through to the inside. That is where the sensible lives, but if ever you see him it means some one is going to die soon. On the top of the rock there grow all manner of charms, but in particular you may sometimes find there a white flower (savelin de mariaguat?) with so sweet a smell that people passing on the highway at the foot of the cliff may easily perceive it. When it is flowering a new blossom comes every hour of the day and every hour another fades and falls. If you are lucky enough to get one of these flowers you may command with it whom you will. You have only to rub it on the palm of your hand, then raise the hand in the direction of a person and speak his name. However far away he may be he will have to obey and come to you. If you go in quest of the flower it is wise to take a white cock, or at least some powdered tobacco, as a gift to the spirit of the rock.

There was one old woman of Bataka whose husband treated her badly and neglected her to run after other women. One day when he was gone fishing she made a lot, a big lot, of cassava bread; and, taking her children with her, went up to the Pagoua Rock, where she was lucky enough to get one of these flowers. With it she went down to the river to bathe, and when she had bathed she rubbed the flower all over her body and flung the remnants to the winds, saying: "Go join your master", which they did, disappearing in that same instant. After this, she and her children took the highway, and went quickly in the direction of Toulaman, now called Londonderry. Soon after they had passed the Castibiena River she heard her husband coming after her with the fish (presumably as a peace offering), but taking her children by the hand she ran and ran until they reached the old Caverne Caraïbe (literally, Carib Barracks, but perhaps a mistake for "caverne", a deep cave on the shore between the village of Wesley, or La Soie, and the Londonderry Estate, showing signs of human occupancy, or at least, fréquentation). Here she knocked and was admitted just as her husband caught up and made a grab at her. Once safely inside, she shouted to him to go away, as she needed him no longer. There was nothing else for him to do; but as he turned to go he was changed into a bird with yellow beak and claws, called Pierrot Vantre, whose shrill persistent call you will often hear even today. The woman is still inside the cave, together with all the other old Caribs. They will not leave it until the end of the world, though it is said they sometimes come out at night to use their boat (an islet about a hundred yards off shore), for one night I passed there myself as I was going fishing, and when I returned the same way some 2 hours later it had disappeared.

I was told that for the last 20 years at least nobody had attempted to scale the rock, as the white cedar which had grown nearby and helped in the ascent had long since been felled by a windstorm. However, Carib ingenuity and agility overcame all difficulties. A slender sapling whose stem rose some 8 feet distant from the sides of the rock served as prop for a crooked stick, hewn and tied in place from materials growing on the spot, whose other end was made to rest on a narrow projecting ledge opposite and above. This precarious bridge once passed, the summit was reached by holding onto handfuls of plant and vine, or onto knobs of crumbling rock. Alas, I did not find the flower. It may be that it was the wrong season, but, in any case, I certainly should not have been so stupid as to forget that white cock.

9: Ober N-5 (1876-1878) 1895
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192 and large buttocks, and most of them in good plight. Their mouths are not over large, and their teeth are perfectly white and close. True it is, their complexion is of an olive [305] color, naturally; their foreheads and noses are flat, not naturally, but by artifice; for their mothers crush them down at their birth, as also during the time they suckle them, imagining it a kind of beauty and perfection. . . . They have large and thick feet, because they go barefoot, and withal so hard that they defie woods and rocks. . . . They 782 believed in evil spirits, and sought to propitiate them by ● 773 presents of game, fruits, etc. They believe that they have as many souls as they feel beatings of the arteries in their bodies, besides the principal one, which is in their heart, and goes to heaven with its god, who carries it thither, to live with other gods; and they imagine they there live the same life as man lives here below. For they do not think the soul to be so far immaterial as to be invisible; but they affirm it to be *subtile*, and of thin substance, as a purified body; and they have but the same word to signify heart and soul.' Other souls, not in the heart, reside in the forest and by the seashore; the former they called *Maboyas*, the latter *Oumalous*. . . . They believe they go after death to live in certain 775 fortunate islands, where they have Arrowak slaves to serve them, swim unwearied in placid streams, and eat of delicious fruits. . . . Of the thunder, God's voice, they are extremely 821 764 afraid. They were prone to leave their houses (huts) after the death of an inmate. It is related, that a young Carib, 797 having been converted to Christianity and taken to France, where he was shown many strange things, at which he showed no astonishment, returned to his tribe, threw off the clothes of civilization, and painted his body with *roucou*, becoming as wild a savage as before. . . . As to the division 842 of labor, the men made the huts and kept them in repair, procured fish and game, also labored some in the fields; the women attended to the domestic duties, painted their husbands with roucou, and spun the cotton yarn, wove hammocks, etc.